

Before the **RECEIVED**
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554
JUL 5 1995

In the matter of

FCC MAIL ROOM

Amendments to the amateur service)
rules including recognition of the)
volunteer examiner session manager)
and amendments for examination)
credit)

WT Docket No. 95-57

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COMMENTS
of
Western Carolina Amateur Radio Society/Vec, Inc.

We believe we are unique among the VECs that operate under the Commission's supervision. Our board of directors is composed totally of active volunteer examiners who have proven themselves as leaders in the program in their home communities. Each is vested with full authority to act on behalf of the VEC without limitation, including not only appointing volunteer examiners, but coordinating testing sessions, serving as distribution centers for needed supplies, forwarding data to the FCC's Licensing Division and performing necessary document retention on behalf of the VEC.

All directors continue as an active volunteer examiner in their home community as well, with summarizing reports of their administration and coordination activities being sent to the VEC's FCC contact person to enable that person to answer any questions the Commission's staff might ask. We believe this method of organization to be uniquely advantageous to the VEC activities as we hypothesize the concept to have originated.

With the stated background, we believe our Board of Directors, speaking collectively, are eminently qualified to comment on some of the particular matters addressed in this action.

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We have used a "Contact VE" in each VE team since the inception of the program as the one person with whom we normally communicated and the person we held responsible for using acceptable procedures in administering the program in the respective area. We really knew of no other way to organize an effective VE team. We expect that we will continue to use a contact VE as the senior person in a VE team, and, while we expect that contact VE to be fully qualified to serve as session manager, it is not reasonable to require any one person's presence at every session tested by a VE team, particularly an especially active group. That team should have several people who are qualified to act in the described capacity.

Of course it must be clearly understood among all participating VEs as to who is serving in that capacity during any session in progress.

Just recently I received a phone call from the hamfest chairman and President-Elect of the local Amateur Radio Club, of which I am a past president. The club has been sponsoring a one day codeless Technician class on roughly quarterly intervals, with the class on Saturday, and the Knoxville VE team testing in the classroom on Sunday. The following Saturday was the annual hamfest, and, of course, we were testing in connection with that event as well.

The caller told me a named individual was a full time Knox County Deputy and had volunteered to spend the entire time of the hamfest inside the building in uniform to comply with the security requirements of the municipally owned exhibition hall housing the event. The problem was that the same individual had been a student at the previous Saturday's class, and had passed Element 2 but missed Element 3A.

The hamfest chairman understandably didn't want to hire a professional guard at the going rate while the deputy retested, and I don't blame him. The question was, "Can you cause our Board of Directors meeting Thursday night to be a coordinated test session and give him a chance to retest before the hamfest." "Certainly" Knowing my addition to the normal attendance at one of the club's board meetings would result in VEs to spare, all I really had to do was take care of the public announcement. Ross Ramsey KC4YDR, as education chairman, was running a code drill on the club's repeater Wednesday evening. I called Ross. "Can you make the announcement for me?" "Of course" and it was done. It appears to us that this is just as effective as requiring the session manager to personally make the announcement. The session manager may not have the necessary time schedule available, may not have the capability, or for other reasons it may be much more convenient for someone else, not necessarily a VE, to physically make the announcement. We think holding the session manger responsible for ensuring the announcement is in fact made is a more practical arrangement and will serve the best interests of Amateur Radio fully as well as requiring the session manager to personally act. The present wording constitutes a totally unnecessary level of micro management of the VEC system.

We are in full support of the concept of recognition of a "Session Manager" as the person with overall responsibility of the session as a whole. The undersigned has served in the described capacity since the inception of the program for one of WCARS/VEC's most active teams. That team tested in excess of 400 examinees at 27 sessions in one recent year. I served as session manager at 25 of the sessions, yet I don't believe I signed a single paper.

Should the contents of an element be compromised, it would probably be the session manager that did it, and most likely in advance of the session. That would leave the administering VEs, regardless of the diligence they exercised in observing the administration of the element during the session, to be at a total loss in detecting the fraud that had been fostered upon them. In a majority of the cases, only the session manager has the opportunity for skulduggery outside the visibility of the entire VE team.

Conditions and possibilities described above convince us the session manager should be required to accept the overall responsibility of the session IN WRITTEN FORM. Should a large VE team wisely have several qualified session managers, absent some record, the identity of the individual who served in such a capacity during a particular session several weeks or a few months past could probably not be positively identified to the degree that the individual would confidently affirm that he had participated in the session, when in fact it was he that had fully discharged the proper responsibilities. Our board of directors has determined this certification will be used in connection with the tests we coordinate, whether it becomes a regulatory requirement or not.

Our VEs use answer sheets that provide for the administering VEs to acknowledge the grade of the examinee on the answer sheet itself. It appears to us that requiring the test papers to reflect the identity of the VEs that administered each element to each examinee would accomplish the apparent objective. To require this detail to be reflected in the log is again micro management of an unacceptable degree. Certainly the answer sheets of WCARS/VEC, Inc. presently accomplish the reflection of that fact, and, from a practical standpoint of implementation, would

require little, if any change from procedures already in place. We believe this is close to, if not in fact, a universal condition. We certainly believe that any inconvenience caused by adding the provision in the paperwork of one, or even a few VECs, would be more than offset by the convenience of implementation to the bulk of the VECs. Without some such record, should a question arise a year or so later, WCARS/VEC probably could not determine who the VEs were that administered a particular element.

We further believe that most, if not all, VECs are presently using a "Session Summary," "Manifest" "Roster" or other document that comes very close to, if not in fact satisfying the other stipulated requirements of a log.

Our thoughts concerning the recognition of credit for elements passed in prior time periods parallel the majority opinion of the National Conference of Volunteer Examiners, Inc. in session and voting on June 22, 1995. Three of our five directors were physically present to collectively cast WCARS/VEC'S vote with the majority. We urge the commission to withdraw its support for this procedure, as we do not believe it will contribute to the overall benefit of amateur radio for various and sundry reasons as mentioned in the NCVEC'S and other comments to which we have access that are being filed on this matter.

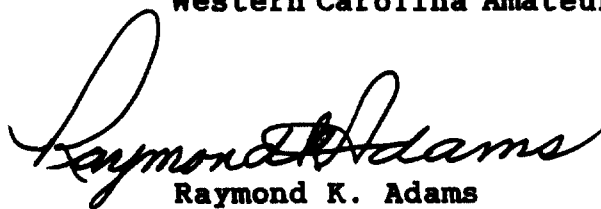
For the reasons stated above, we urge the Commission to modify the rules as proposed with the below revision of 97.515(b) and (d)

(b) Before each examination session, the VE session manager must ensure the making of a public announcement stating the location, date and time of the session. The number of examinees may be limited.

(d) The VE session manager must maintain a log for the session. The log must include the names of the VEs, the names of the examinees, and the examination elements administered to each examinee together with the results thereof. The VE session manager is responsible for ensuring that the test papers indicate the identity of the individual VEs that administered each element to each examinee. The session log, or alternatively, the session papers, must also contain a statement dated and signed by the session manager containing the following wording:

"I certify that the administration of this testing session complies with Part 97 of the Commission's Rules and with the instructions provided by the Coordinating VEC and the FCC"

Western Carolina Amateur Radio Society/VEC, Inc

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Raymond K. Adams".

Raymond K. Adams
FCC Contact Person
July 3, 1995